

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend Claims 18, 35, 51, 63, and 73 as follows:

Claim 18, line 2, insert --or equal to-- after "than".

Claim 35, line 2, insert --or equal to-- after "than".

Claim 51, line 2, insert --or equal to-- after "than".

Claim 63, line 2, insert --or equal to-- after "than".

Claim 73, line 2, insert --or equal to-- after "than".

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request that the foregoing amendments be entered prior to examination of the application. No new matter is added. Support for the subject matter of the amendments is found in the specification.

It is believed that no fee is required for consideration of this Preliminary Amendment. However, if a fee is required, the Commissioner is authorized to charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 03-2469.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: May 15, 2001


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